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Maine-Lines: A Quarterly Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Summer / Fall 2003

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened

Nancy Melanson

Maine Department of Labor, Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.gov

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DIVISION OF DEAFNESS

MAINE-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING OR LATE-DEAFENED

Blaine House Tea in Celebration Of Deaf Culture Week



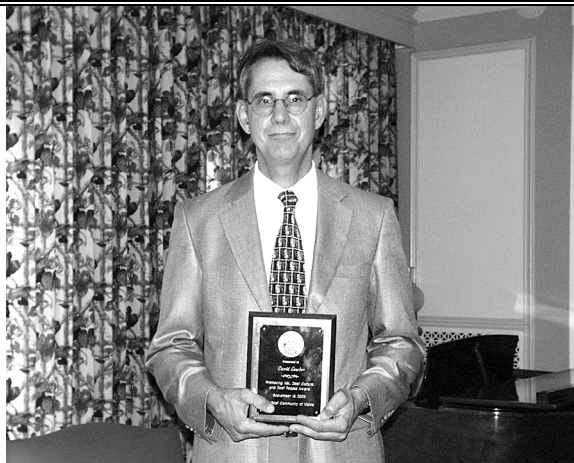
Welcoming remarks, First Lady, Karen Baldacci
Sue Brule, Interpreter

The twelfth annual Blaine House Tea and Deaf Culture Week awards took place on September 18, 2003. The event served as a kick off to Deaf Culture Week, a celebration of Deaf Culture and the wonderful heritage of American Sign Language (ASL), literature, art and folklore.

First Lady, Karen Baldacci, gave the welcoming remarks to the 100 or so guests. The keynote speaker was John Dunleavy an Independent Living Specialist with Alpha-One in South Portland who is Deaf. His topic "Possibilities" was an animated message about succeeding with a positive attitude. Several individuals were recognized for their significant contributions to the Deaf Community.



Keynote Speaker, John Dunleavy



David Lawlor, Promoting ASL, Deaf Culture, and Deaf People Award

Promoting ASL, Deaf Culture, and Deaf People Award

David Lawlor Director of Mobius, Inc. received the Promoting ASL, Deaf Culture, and Deaf People Award. David has played an instrumental role in Deaf Services in Maine for almost 20 years. He was the first Deaf Services Coordinator for the Department of Mental Health & Mental Retardation now the Department of Behavioral & Developmental Services.

He has been a tireless supporter of the deaf and hard of hearing consumers' rights to communicate in the modality that works best for them, particularly ASL and Visual Gestural Communication (VGC). He employs Deaf professionals, in direct service and in consultant roles, who are fluent in ASL and VGC. He insists that his staff take ASL & VGC classes to communicate with their clients. He hired a Deaf teacher to provide these classes.

His signing skills, learned at Gallaudet University, allow him to directly communicate with Deaf staff.

With Jan DeVinney, he established the Statewide Communication Assessment Project, which has led to many positive changes in the communication environment of Maine's deaf adults with mental retardation.

He really has worked hard to promote deaf individuals regardless of communication and cognitive abilities.



Lorrie Chipman, Outstanding Advocate for the Deaf Award

Outstanding Advocate for the Needs of the Deaf Community Award

Lorrie Chipman, an Individual Support Coordinator, (ISC) at the Department of Behavioral & Developmental Services received the Outstanding Advocate for the Needs of the Deaf Community Award. When Lorrie started working for the Department of Behavioral & Developmental Services 7½ years ago she had no experience with deafness. She was "abducted" into being the Designated Signing/Deaf Services Case Manager for the Bangor area with no signing experience and no real world or work experience with deaf people.

She has thrown herself into the job, specializing in deaf consumers, taking ASL and VGC classes. She also promoted the Peer Support Group in Bangor and made sure the group could meet at the Regional Peer Center. She insists that all deaf and hard-of-hearing clients have communication skills as a goal written in their Independent Living plan. She teaches other ISCs what she has learned about deafness and the deaf MR community. She is a relentless advocate for her clients and for all Bangor clients with communication barriers.

Lorrie created a two person signing MR group home in the Bangor Area, 80 miles north of any other service.

She is working with Pat Larsen of Alpha-One on a project to educate deaf individuals on independent living services.



Melinda J. Smith, Special Commendation Award

Special Commendation Award

Two Special Commendation awards were presented this year. The first was given to Melinda J. Smith for her many years of working with deaf children and their families.

Melinda is a graduate of Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD) and has worked there for many years in different jobs. She is an advocate to the families with young deaf children.

This is her seventh year with the Parent-Infant-Toddler Program at GBSD as a part time Deaf mentor. She's a tireless worker in the field. She is very flexible in working with families to choose what is appropriate for their deaf child's needs. Melinda is described as upbeat and a joy to work with.

She established the Deaf Mentor Program, working with GBSD and other agencies to meet the needs of young deaf children and their families. She worked in this program for eight years as a mentor and coordinator and continues to recruit Deaf adults as mentors for the program.

Melinda has worked as a Deaf Developmental Therapist for Child Development Services for 11 years. She travels statewide to teach families how to improve communication with their children while developing their language, ASL, and exposing them to Deaf Culture.

She has a family, including two teenagers, and is working on her Master's degree in Special Education/Early Intervention Program. This is a very busy lady.



Baxter Compensation Authority Board, Special Commendation Award
Pictured right to left: John Paterson, Lois Reckitt, & Brenda Schertz
representing the Board. Also pictured, John Shattuck, Director, BCA

Special Commendation Award

The second Special Commendation Award was given to the members of the Baxter Compensation Authority Board. For the past year and a half the BCA Board members have practically volunteered their time and resources to the establishment of the BCA Program. For much of this time the Board met twice a month to ensure the integrity and progress of the administration of BCA. Now that the program is fully operational, it is time to recognize the BCA Board for their contribution.

John Paterson, Chair of the Board accepted the award for the BCA. John has provided strong leadership in implementing this unique program. Because the BCA is the only program of its kind in the country, John and the BCA Board have appreciated the importance of establishing policy and standards, which may very well be used as a model to provide compensation to survivors who suffered abuse at other state operated schools.

John is one of five people who have contributed their time and expertise to this most important effort. The other four BCA members are: Brenda Schertz, Lois Galgay Reckitt, Robert Murray, and Stephen Rich. John Shattuck serves as the Program Director for the BCA. The Deaf community and the State of Maine owe them a greatly deserved debt of gratitude.



Dorothy Jordan, Clifton F. Rodgers Award Winner (L)
with Deb McCrum, DoD Advisory Council Chair

Clifton F. Rodgers Award

This award is named for Clifton F. Rodgers, a resident of Maine all his life. He attended the Maine School for the Deaf and lived in Belfast for over 30 years with his wife Dorothy. Cliff was a member of the Advisory Council and also worked for the Division of Deafness. Quotes that describe him were; " He made an indelible impression on everyone he came in contact with, for his style always created goodwill and warm feelings"; "His knowledge of Maine and its Deaf Culture were immense"; and " He passed through this world making it a better place."

This year the award went to Dorothy Jordan who has worked in or with the Deaf community for many years. It is like a "lifetime achievement award." Dot is the third person in her family to receive this award, the award was named for her first husband Clifton Rodgers and her present husband Clay Jordan received the award in 1991.

Dorothy is a remarkable lady very involved in many activities with the Deaf community. First a bit history: she was a student at Colby where she graduated with a degree in Biology; that in itself is quite an achievement since she relied on lip-reading all the way through college. She married Cliff Rodgers and raised a family. After Cliff died she then met and married Clay Jordan. Together they have volunteered many hours for Ingraham Volunteers and delivered many TTYs for the TTY Program.

Volunteering is a way of life for Dot. She has served in many organizations and programs, like Maine Deaf Senior Citizens, Maine Association of the Deaf (MeAD), and the DoD Advisory Council. She's been a premier fundraiser for Caron Street House and the Maine Center on Deafness.

Dot has worked very hard to make life better for people in the Deaf community and while ASL is not her first language she has always worked for and with the Deaf.

You can't talk about Dot without mentioning her love for travel. She and Clay have traveled the world. Egypt, China, the South Seas and the Panama Canal to mention a few of the places they've been. Wherever they travel you can be sure they have been great diplomats for Maine's Deaf community.

When Dot received her award, her husband, brother, son and granddaughter were present at the ceremony. She accepted her award with humility and humor. She spoke of being a member of MeAD since it was Maine Mission for the Deaf.



Exhibit Table at the Deaf Festival

Deaf Culture Festival '03 *Another Successful Year!*

Over five hundred people attended the 14th Annual Deaf Culture Festival October 4 at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD) in Falmouth! The crowd included the usual large number of Deaf community members of all ages, mixed with hearing people eager to learn more about Deaf Culture. New this year were several hearing students from Portland High School (PHS) who are taking American Sign Language for the first time through a partnership between GBSD and PHS.



Exhibit Table at the Deaf Festival

This year's festival included craft vendors and companies that sell assistive devices for people who are deaf/hard of hearing.

Many community agencies were represented as well as Deaf clubs. One special attraction this year was the "FaceTs of Communication" lighthouse (sponsored by the Maine Center on Deafness (MCD), Underwritten by AT&T) that had been part of Portland's recent *Lighthouses on Parade*. The lighthouse, which was decorated by local deaf artists, was part of the Maine Center on Deafness' exhibit.

The lighthouse showcases the many ways hearing and deaf people communicate with each other.



Roxanne Baker with the "FaceTs of Communication" Lighthouse

Another popular exhibit was the model of the GBSD campus with its new academic building. The new building replaces the demolished Middle and High Schools and will be open by the 2004 – 2005 school year.

This year's festival also included a very successful Children's Carnival sponsored by GBSD Parents. The Carnival featured a wide variety of children's activities and raised money for the GBSD PTA to use for after-school programming.

What was missing from this year's Festival was adult programming. But Festival organizers took advantage of the time and the crowd to recruit members for next year's Deaf Culture Festival (DCF) Committee. This year's committee consisted of only three people – one from MCD, one from GBSD, and one volunteer. Twenty-two people signed up for the DCF '04 Committee! Next year's committee includes nine people representing MCD, GBSD, Community Counseling Center, Alpha One and the Maine Association of the Deaf, plus 13 individual volunteers. The goal of the expanded committee is to ensure that future festivals offer presentations in addition to exhibitors.

So, keep your eyes open for news on next year's Deaf Culture Festival! It's an event you won't want to miss!!

Baxter Compensation Authority Update

The Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA) has had approximately 220 contacts from former students. There have been 63 claims brought forward to the BCA Panel and \$3.6 million dollars has been awarded. John Shattuck, Program Director for BCA, has met with the Governor's staff to discuss the unmet need of approximately 6 million dollars and to request that this amount be included in the supplemental budget for future awards. Senator Beth Edmonds will sponsor a bill being brought to the Legislature in case the Governor does not include the funds in his budget.

Safer Place 5th Year Anniversary



Songo River Queen , Naples, Maine

The 5th Anniversary celebration for Safer Place took place on September 13, 2003 aboard the Songo River Queen in Naples, Maine. The cruise shipped out at 1:00 p.m. and returned at 4:00 p.m. There was a good turnout of people who enjoyed appetizers and cake.

The weather was fantastic, warm and sunny. The scenery was beautiful, the leaves on the trees were still green and people along the shore were still enjoying their camps. The boat slowly cruised Long Lake in Naples and returned to its dock three hours later. The children played games with each other on the boat and adults enjoyed conversations with old and new friends.

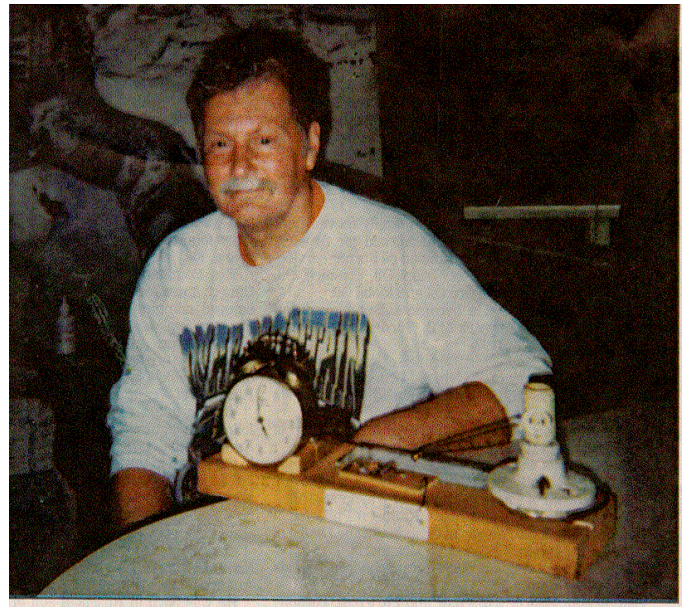
It was a very relaxing, pleasant day, and there were lots of smiles all day long.

Safer Place Tree Planting Ceremony



Tree Planting on Mackworth Island

On October 18, 2003 a tree was planted on Mackworth Island in memory of James Levier, who died on March 16, 2003. A small group gathered, including James' two daughters. It was a perfect fall day in Maine when we planted the tree. A sugar maple was chosen because its leaves turn beautiful colors in the fall reminding us of James. He was an artist who saw beauty in nature and was able to show it in his work.



James Levier, 1941 - 2001

After the tree was planted we shared our thoughts and memories of James, both happy and sad. Although James' life was difficult and his death shocked and saddened us, planting the tree in his memory was very healing.

Deaf Legislative Updates:

Resolve: An Act to Study the Development of an Emergency Alert Notification System for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Individuals Chapter 78

The Study Committee has been working through the summer researching alerting systems and surveying consumers. The committee's report has been completed with draft legislation and it will be reported to the Energy and Utilities Committee.

L.D. 1087, An Act to Require all Health Insurers to Cover the Costs of Hearing Aids

This is a funding bill to require health insurance providers in Maine to cover the costs of hearing aids. This bill was carried over into the next legislative session. The State Bureau of Insurance has prepared a cost analysis. The work session was held on December 3 and the sub committee's amendments to the original legislation were discussed.

"An Act to Improve the Administration of the Baxter Compensation Program" was signed into law by Governor Baldacci.

The requested changes are now part of the law.

1.) Confidentiality: The only information that can be made public is: the claimant's name, the amount of compensation, and a summary of the panel's decision. Everything else would remain confidential except to the Attorney General's office, the Governor's office, and the chairs of the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature, which supervises the Baxter Compensation Authority.

2.) New information can be brought to the appeal board and the claim will be sent back to the panel to be reconsidered. The appeal board can increase but cannot decrease a compensation award.

3.) Administrative costs for the Baxter Compensation Program cannot exceed \$1.5 million over the course of the program, which ends in the year 2006. The annual report will show how the money is being spent.

Did you know?

- ❖ **Identification Cards Available for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.** The Division of Deafness has ID cards to offer to anyone who is deaf or hard of hearing. The laminated cards are produced at the Division of Deafness and they are free of charge. Applications and examples of the cards are now available by calling the Division at the numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter or visit DoD's website www.maine.gov/rehab/dod.
- ❖ **The Cumberland County Sheriff's Department** has a new TTY number 1-800-501-1111 and fax number 893-2844. Please change the numbers in your TTY Directory listing.
- ❖ **The Division of Deafness has a new toll-free TTY, please distribute the number to others: 1-888-755-0023.** The 1-800-698-4440 number is now voice only.
- ❖ **Safer Place:** Were you physically abused (slapped, pushed, hair pulled) by teachers or staff at Governor Baxter School for the Deaf or Maine School for the Deaf? Were you sexually abused (touched on your body or forced to have sex) by teachers, staff, or other students?
Contact Safer Place:
(207) 892-6814 (V/TTY)
(207) 892-6602 (FAX) or
E-mail: place4safe@aol.com
- ❖ The **2003 edition of *Resources A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*** is now available on our web site or in hard copy. For your **free** copy contact the Division of Deafness. Contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.
- ❖ The next **Division of Deafness Advisory Council Meeting** is **January 8, 2004**. The meeting starts at 6:15 p.m. and ends at 9:00 p.m. It will be held at the Augusta CareerCenter, 2 Anthony Avenue, 2nd Floor, Conference Room 2 in Augusta. Please call the Division of Deafness at the numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter for directions or information. This meeting is open to the public.

- ❖ The **Equal Access Program** has been operating since January 1, 2002. The Division of Deafness began the program which provides a rebate for all cell phone calls made to or from a person using a TTY in Maine including relay calls. Please contact the Division of Deafness at the numbers on the last page to get an application or for more information.

- ❖ **There are TTY numbers for information about Bioterrorism or Terrorism incidents.**

The **New Nonemergency Toll-Free Number for the State Police is 1-888-524-7900**. This number is answered in Orono and then routed to the closest State Police Barracks. The number is accessible 24 hours/7 days a week. The number is to be used for information only, not emergencies.

There is a possibility that when your call is answered, the greeting may be "911, what is your emergency?" or "Is this an emergency?" If this happens, do not be alarmed. Just explain that you need information.

If you have an emergency, you should dial 911 or your local emergency number.

Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has an informational TTY number you can call. The number is 626-4434; this number is accessible 24 hours/7 days a week.

This number is in the process of changing to 624-4437 and the change will be complete by the end of 2003. No specific date is available.

These numbers should NOT be the first numbers called. Please call your local police department first, the State Police second, and MEMA last. Your local TTY Information numbers should be available from your local police department or sheriff's office. It is with high hopes that the next TTY Directory will have local information numbers in the blue pages.

If you have any questions about Anthrax, Smallpox, West Nile Virus, Severe Acute Respirator Syndrome (SARS), or other public health issues the **Center for Disease Control (CDC)** has a TTY number **1-866-874-2646**.

The hours of operation are: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. and Saturday & Sunday, 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Their web site is:

www.bt.cdc.gov

- ❖ **Maine-Lines Anyone?**

Give *Maine-Lines* to a friend. Encourage them to sign up for mailings. All we need are names and addresses sent to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Deafness, Attn: Nancy Melanson, 150 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 or e-mail to Nancy.A.Melanson@maine.gov

- ❖ **Help us find your classmates from Baxter School and the Maine School for the Deaf**

If you know someone who does not receive *Maine-Lines*, that means we don't have their name and address and they may miss very important information related to compensation and other news in the Deaf community. If you know someone who would like to receive this information, please call the Division of Deafness at the numbers on the last page of *Maine-Lines*.

- ❖ **Captioning Complaints**

Please refer to the *Resources A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, complaint section.

- ❖ **Websites**

Division of Deafness (DoD) is announcing their new accessible website

www.maine.gov/rehab/dod

Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD) is announcing their website

www.baxter.pvt.k12.me.us/

Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA)

www.baxtercomp.org/

Maine Center on Deafness (MCD)

www.mainecenterondeafness.org

ADOP - Advocates for Deaf Oral Programs

www.adop.org

DeafBlind information

www.helenkeller.org

The **State of Maine** has a **web home page** that can connect you to all the different State agencies. The website is: www.maine.gov

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Division of Deafness
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Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Kathleen Brogan, Director

Division of Deafness

The Division of Deafness provides a program of services to Deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened citizens of Maine, which include: information and referral, advocacy, statewide registry, and accessibility promotion.

Jan DeVinney, Director
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0150
Tel: 624-5964 (TTY only)

E-mail: Jan.A.DeVinney@maine.gov

Alice Crandall Johnson
Rehabilitation Consultant
624-5966 (TTY/V)

E-mail: Alice.C.Johnson@maine.gov

Nancy Melanson, Assistant to the Director
Tel: 624-5965 (TTY), 624-5963 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (TTY) (within Maine only)
1-800-698-4440 (V) (within Maine only)
624-5980 (FAX)

E-mail: Nancy.A.Melanson@maine.gov

*The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request.*